The
COMMONWEAL

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Editors: EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.
PHILIP BURNHAM
HARRY LORIN BINSSE, *Managing Editor*; C. G. PAULDING, *Literary Editor*; JOHN C. CORT, *Associate Editor*; JOHN BRUBAKER, *Advertising Manager*.

The Naked "Innocents"

PROBABLY there is nothing worse that can happen to a man's heart and mind than to feel that whenever somebody is in trouble he deserves to be in trouble. You see this man picking things out of a garbage can and it is the worst thing in the world if you say that he must have been a bad boy at school and that, surely before the garbage can, he must have picked his nose. Or you see the Jewish people of whom God on earth was one, humiliated in Europe and homeless, driven here and there, argued about and explained, and if you argue about them and explain them and try to relieve their humiliation, and even try to find them a home, that is all to the good—but it is no good at all, indifference will come to end the effort, if you think that the Jews, who have to be saved, have deserved to be in the position from which they have to be saved.

The pursuit of guilt had best be left to the mercy of God; whatever man is compelled to do about it should be undertaken most prudently. Because, otherwise, it becomes too easy to let the poor starve because good honest men have a job and do not drink, the Europeans starve because they had no business going to war, the Jews homeless, because they have an insatiable and avid tendency to wander.

In *Life* (May 6), photographed on page 102 and the following, are people who also have a tendency to wander. Stark naked they are wandering about a room. On the floor of this room is the matter for the sewers. The naked men wander through it and when they are tired they sit down in it. A naked man is standing on a window sill, immensely interested in whatever there is outside. We do not know what there is outside—except daylight and the sky, in which perhaps there are white clouds moving, or perhaps it is raining or perhaps there is the sun; perhaps the man is staring into the sun.

In another room a very old woman sits on a bench; she leans forward staring down at the floor; she would look like the old woman the barman never turns out because she is so old, so tired, and who sits there, silently in the saloon when it is near closing time at a table in the corner looking down at the floor, if it were not that she, also, is completely naked. In another room a woman lies abandoned on the cement floor; there are also women strapped to benches, men strapped to beds, men and women with their arms strapped to their chests—in the condition technically known as under "restraint." In the photographs all these people are silent; there are no cries.

We have seen pictures like these before, not worse than these, of concentration camps in Europe, but looking at them the whole thing has been complicated by the question of guilt—that of the Germans, of course, but also, embarrassingly, by that of their captives, because why did they go into the resistance movements, or why were they Poles or Jews, or French, or why were they prisoners because why did they go to war and why, anyway, were they Europeans?

In the case of the *Life* photographs it is different. These naked people in their captivity and filth are Americans. They are in Byberry near Philadelphia or they are in Massillon, Ohio, or they are in Cleveland. Not only they are Americans but also they are guiltless; precisely they are what an older generation called "innocents."

They are insane.

That is why they are where they are. But that is not why they are crowded, naked, beaten, in filth, half starved, neglected—and rarely cured.

There was a time when America was ahead of Europe in the practical care of the mentally ill—now we have them in concentration camps. 400,000 human beings are crowded into 180 state mental institutions where they are treated to bitter indignities. They are there because they are forgotten.

With *Life's* publication of the photographs it will be difficult for them to remain forgotten. It will be difficult for state legislatures and state governors to keep the question quiet. It will be difficult also for Americans to blame foreigners, Europeans, anyone, for anything that happens anywhere, so long as this horror is happening here.

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Imposed Political Democracy

CURRENT NEWS reports of the political situation in Japan must confirm the widely-held American conviction as to the mysteriousness of the Orient. Occupied Japan held the first democratic election in that Empire's long history some six weeks ago. The balloting took place upon General MacArthur's insistence and in spite of the considerable opposition of other members of the inter-Allied Far Eastern Commission.

The General appeared pleased with the whole thing. He liked the vigor with which the various parties campaigned (with the possible exception of the volubility of the Japanese Communists). In his official report to Washington he praised the Nipponese newspapers and radio for the way they had taken hold. He gave no prominent indication of being displeased with the results: a victory for the conservative parties, with the Communists winning only five seats in the Diet despite their heavy campaign expenditures. Everything appeared to be running according to schedule.

The next step was to form a coalition government, for no single party had won an electoral majority. The initiative clearly belonged to the Liberals, the representatives largely of small business and of a Manchester political philosophy. For they had won 142 seats, considerably more than their nearest political rivals. All went well until the very eve of the appointment of Mr. Hatoyama, the leader of the Liberal Party, as new Japanese Premier charged with the task of forming a coalition cabinet. At the last moment a directive came down from the MacArthur headquarters forbidding his appointment. Moreover, the American directive designated Mr. Hatoyama as an "undesirable person," who would not even be permitted to take his seat in the Diet. Result: widespread confusion among the Japanese.

Various explanations were forthcoming. It is said that the General was becoming impatient with the lack of speed evinced in forming the new Japanese Government, but he is agreed to be as well versed in the ways of the Orient as any American living. Suddenly the gravest charges were brought forward as to Mr. Hatoyama's past. He was an ultra-nationalist; he approved of Pearl Harbor. His writings spoke admiringly of Hitler and Mussolini; he expressed loyalty to the ideas of the Tanaka Government, accused of drawing up the Tanaka Memorial (a Japanese plan for conquest of the Orient and domination of the world). But surely all these past performances had long been known, while at the same time it must have been obvious that Mr. Hatoyama as leader of the largest political party was the logical nominee for Premier.

Two explanations occur to us. Either General MacArthur had some special reason best known to himself for wishing to humiliate the Japanese just now—or at least to remind them that he is still boss. Or else the General has yielded at the eleventh hour to Russian and Chinese pressure. Mr. Hatoyama defended his record vigorously but says he will resign. Mr. Katayama, head of the next largest party, the Socialists or Social Democrats, who won only 93 seats in the election, will try his hand at the now much more difficult task of forming an acceptable yet workable government. Meanwhile the Japanese Liberals are all at sea as to what to do in parliament, for they have no leader to follow. It all goes to show that political democracy in an occupied nation simply cannot be.

The French and Their Constitution

WHEN LAST WEEK we commented—somewhat philosophically—on the constitution which had been elaborated for submission to the French electorate, it did not seriously occur to us that this document would be rejected at the polls. The MRP, of course, had announced its opposition, and, as we pointed out, some Socialists were disturbed. But evidently a combination of factors, and we hope that French political maturity was of major importance, led to the defeat of this undoubtedly dangerous basic law. The reaction among some American friends of France has been one of regret, since among them there is a greater fear of the chaos which may spring from the lack of a constitution than there is of the faults inherent in the proposed constitution.

We are inclined to take a more sanguine view. There is no question that the principal inspirers of the excessive centralization of power which marred the document rejected by a majority of the French people were the Communists, who saw their advantage lying in precisely such a centralization, which would make easy for them a total seizure of power if they could obtain a majority. The Communists having now been shown that the people of France clearly do not want so vast a measure of power centralized in a single legislative body—for that, as we said last week, was the publicly debated issue—we hope that the next basic law submitted to the French electorate will be sounder in principle and will secure the necessary majority of votes. As we have pointed out, there are broad areas of the rejected constitution to which no one would object; hence the task of revision need not be too vast. And we believe that a country is well advised to risk economic and even political dislocation rather than to make bad law. It is easy to exaggerate the dangers of such dislocation; it was many years before our own country finally adopted an appropriate constitution, and although things went badly, the results were scarcely tragic. Another few months delay will surely not be fatal. Even French business-

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men seem to feel the same way, though they know that any constitution they are likely to get will be anti-capitalist. When the results of the election were published, the Paris stock exchange registered handsome rises in the prices of all securities.

Legislative Irresponsibility

THE distressing antics of Mr. John L. Lewis—not that we lack sympathy with his desire to see the working conditions of his miners improved along with their pay—have had the subsidiary effect of encouraging Congress in its stalling game on essential legislation, not the least important of which is action by the Senate on the British loan. We have consistently favored the British loan because of our conviction that it is necessary if we are to avoid economic warfare with all its disastrous consequences and if we are to achieve a reasonable prosperity not only for Britain but for ourselves in the long run. Were the Senate under normal procedure to vote the loan down, we would think that the Senate was acting unwisely, but we would respect the Senate's honest decision. But instead of pursuing a normal course and bringing the matter to a vote, the opponents of the loan have elected to do everything they can to prevent a vote. We must presume that these opponents are afraid that the loan would pass were it to come to a vote—as is clearly the desire of a reasonable majority of the American people. But whatever their motive, their attempt to let the whole question slide into default is dishonorable and calculated to do another great hurt to American prestige. It is the old story. We end up by not seeming to have the guts to make our own decisions. And now Mr. Lewis, by provoking a swarm of "reform" bills intended to modify our basic governmental policy toward labor, has supplied one more excuse for taking the easy and the despicable way out.

Palestine

WE HAVE never been able to make up our minds on the subject of Jewish immigration into Palestine. We fully recognize the desperate need of Europe's remaining Jews for a homeland in which they can be reasonably confident of living unmolested. We are likewise aware that the Jewish colonies in the Holy Land have in fact proved a great economic asset to their Arab neighbors. We are aware that the question has been used by Arab nationalists as a means to arouse passions which need never have been aroused. But we are likewise and equally suspicious of Zionist nationalism and we cannot withhold our sympathy from the natives of Palestine who, however shortsightedly, seem to prefer to keep their country for their own use. Americans, of all people, can with the least grace criticize others for attempts to restrict immigration. And hence we cannot make up our minds, especially since we believe that the first duty of our own country is itself to provide a haven of refuge to the harborless.

But the immediate political question is an entirely different matter. The fact is that we joined the British in setting up a joint commission to investigate and to recommend. The fact is that this commission has unanimously made certain recommendations. The fact is that Washington at once got a bad case of the jitters and hastily explained that, having joined in the recommendation, we would take no further action, thus leaving the British to handle as hot a mess of political chestnuts as can readily be imagined, and giving Russia a heavenly opportunity to present herself before the Arab world as protector of Arab interests and aspirations. Once again the United States has betrayed an incredible capacity for weakness, considering our actual strength. Either we should never have participated in the joint commission or we should be prepared to do something about it. We are rapidly assuming the position of being the earth's strongest power without either the will or capacity to make any use of that power. And we should remember the parable of the talents.

Pointing the Finger

LOOKING for scapegoats is a means of evading personal responsibilities; but assessing blame can be useful in arriving at solutions. Two nations appear to be more responsible for the famine which threatens to sweep the world than any others: the United States and Soviet Russia.

In this country the guilt is primarily two-fold. Producers of the nation's foodstuffs held on to their wheat too long in hopes of making big money, or they fed it to livestock, which has been selling at dizzy prices, a large percentage of it on the black market. The President, the Secretary of Agriculture and others in Washington who have long been well informed have been tragically slow to act. They failed to manifest enough courage to adopt adequate rationing and take the other steps which were clearly indicated by first-hand reports many months ago. And back of all this has been the self-absorption, indifference and lethargy of the American public in this vital matter.

Soviet Russia on her part, by quartering so many of her troops in Balkan countries and other adjacent lands which had served as Europe's granary, woefully cut down the Continent's available food supply. For Russian troops do not provide for their own food needs but live off the lands they occupy. As the famine danger is long term, the remedy in both cases is still obvious.

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Three Men of Argentina

The editor of *Sur* talks of the spirit of its founders

Victoria Ocampo

IT IS VERY wonderful to live in Argentina but we felt then that we wanted to be known outside of Argentina, in the United States and in Europe; we did not want to live in Argentina as on an unvisited and silent island and so in 1931 I founded the monthly magazine called *Sur,* which means South.

In the first issue I published a letter to Waldo Frank because Frank was one of the few North Americans who read what our Argentinian writers were trying to say and who read them without thinking that what they said could be entirely foreign to him. I wanted to thank him and I wanted to speak through him to the United States. I wanted to tell him and North Americans and Europeans about what it is like to be a writer in South America and the peculiar loneliness of that state. In that first issue of *Sur* it was a Mexican, Alfonso Reyes, who spoke for all of us.

He had, he said, lunched with friends of Henry James—in Paris, of course, because at that time all Latin Americans always were lunching in Paris—and the conversation had been about staying in America or leaving America. William James had remained, Henry had not. That was one of the things about being an American. The temptation to emigrate once again but in the opposite direction has been very strongly felt by some of our writers. Brought up on European writing, discovering themselves in books which had been thought out, suffered and written on another continent, how could they have escaped desiring to go to Europe? Alfonso Reyes tried to explain to certain British friends of his the fact that the existence of the writer in America implied a tragic or at the least a pathetic division in his heart. For us, he said, there are circles within circles of unavoidable pressures. (That was true in 1931 and before, but since then things have changed immensely.) For the South American writer, as for all men everywhere, the first fatal condition has been expressed once and for all by Calderon and you have to start from this:

> Porque el delito mayor
> Del hombre es haber nacido . . .

The second and slightly more specific tragedy is to have come too late into a world that is too old, with the consequence that you suffer from those incessant cramps which we call anachronisms.

The third. In addition to the embarrassing disadvantage of belonging to the human race and to our modern times there is the further disadvantage of being Americans—that is, born in a branch office and not at the center of world civilization.

The fourth. Handicapped by being Americans, we are still more handicapped by being Latins. (For in those days they kept talking about Anglo-Saxon superiority.)

The fifth. To belong, within the Latin orbit, to the Spanish segment at a time when the Spanish lion (because the British lion is not the only lion) was tired and old and mangy—and at a time when the sun into which that lion had stared —perhaps too long—was set.

The sixth. Within the Spanish world to be a branch office once again, a dialect, a derivation. Spanish, American, the word *Spanish* joined to the word *American* by a hyphen as though by a chain.

The seventh. And in this Spanish-American world to be born in a zone permeated by an ageless Indian presence. (Reyes was alluding to his native Mexico.)

The eighth. To be born through the accidents of geography immediately next to an immense and powerful nation.

The wind, a fresh clear wind, is beginning to dispel these oppressive ghosts, he added, and South Americans must open every window in order that no ghost may remain.

★

The group that founded *Sur* went to work opening all the windows. The men and women of this group dared to be human beings, faced the fact that they live in a modern world, that they were Americans, Latins and even Spanish-Americans. Among them there were those who could have emigrated to Paris, to London, to Madrid. They could have satisfied their tastes and their aspirations in Europe; they could have lived lives that would have been enriched by the accumulated treasure of a past to which they could claim rightly to be the heirs. But they understood the fact that Spanish-American poverty, so revolting

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at times, always so hard to accept, for them was their only pride and their one salvation. They knew that to accept this barrenness would make them worthy to inherit everything which is denied to parasites; that this temporal poverty was a necessary novitiate and not a humiliating destitution. They knew also that if Europe's civilization—through one of those ironical reversals which are so frequent in the history of our planet—were ever to fall into the hands of infidels—as Christ's tomb once fell—it might be for us, for the Americans of the future and for the Americans of all the Americas to deliver it from captivity and to pay the ransom.

Such was the state of mind of the *Sur* writers when we founded the magazine. We were there, in our Argentina, drawn toward Europe, held by our native land.

★

Four years before we founded *Sur* Ricardo Güiraldes died. He had worked for years and few had paid much attention to his work, and then he published "Don Segundo Sombra"—and was famous. In that first issue of *Sur* we printed some of his early letters, of 1917 and 1921, which reveal his bitterness, his doubts, his determination and his integrity. His family was of Spanish origin and he lived in one of those great *estancias* where the old traditions are maintained and where the few real *gauchos* still surviving herd cattle. The men of his generation had been more influenced by French writing than by Spanish, and Güiraldes spoke French as a second mother tongue. He lived particularly in the atmosphere of the most subtle and difficult French contemporary writers such as Mallarmé, Laforgue, Saint-Léger, Rimbaud, Tristan Corbière. He was a friend of Fargue, the poet, and of Valéry Larbaud, novelist and translator. In August, 1921, he wrote the latter to explain his decision not to return to Paris. "My principal reason for remaining here," he said, "is that I feel it necessary to be close to those things which must be a basis for my literary work. It seems to me that there is so much to be said about this country that I am in despair at not being a one-man orchestra—with cymbals tied to my legs, bells on my head—so that I could write the poetry, the philosophy, the music, the pictures of a race which has not found self-expression . . . In Europe the problem consists in seeing things through the prism of an interesting temperament. Many writers torture their wits looking for new forms. But here the secret would be to forget all about European research and allow the native themes themselves to create in your writing the natural and adequate forms to express them."

And later he adds: "The vast horizon which is before me at every step makes me feel as if I were a poor man lost on the pampas seeking my way and thinking that I see it stretching out before me in all directions. Perhaps others will come who shall advance unhesitatingly through this wilderness in which I will have lost myself completely, leaving only the faint traces of my bones—of all my efforts. If these traces serve as a landmark, then this anxiety of mine will not have been useless."

For Ricardo Güiraldes, for so many others, for myself, Europe and our friends in Europe were part of ourselves. From time to time we thirsted for Europe and had to bring Europe close to our lips. We were like men advancing across a desert, dreaming of a cool oasis in which we could drink and rest before continuing our journey. Yet in spite of the cool spring, the shade, the swaying green of the palm trees, in spite of the delightful and dangerous rest, we kept coming back to the sand storm and to our eternal South American mirage. Europe was an indispensable and blessed rest, yet we never believed that we had the right to let ourselves become chained by its charms. We never gave our consent. Exiles in Europe, exiles from America, in America from Europe, our true country seemed somewhere in mid-Atlantic between the two continents.

Güiraldes was always tormented by the attraction of Europe, the compelling attraction of Argentina. Yet "Don Segundo Sombra" was born, and this devoted reader of Mallarmé and of Saint-Léger wrote the most Argentinian, the most indigenous, the most *criollo* of books—a prose poem on life in the great *estancias,* the *gauchos,* the silver knives, the wide rivers, the horses, the cattle, the spurs, the silence of the endless plains, the stars over the plains at night. And out of all this material, and with his love, Güiraldes made a book which could be read beyond our frontiers.

Others soon were to celebrate the humble daily life. Jorge Luis Borges was one of these, but he left the countryside for another daily and humble life—that of the desolate city suburbs. The countryside had retained a picturesque quality, a local color quality, which Borges deliberately sacrificed because he, together with many present Argentinian writers, was unwilling to use any of the trappings which, no matter how charming, make characters in Argentinian books furnish foreigners with possible costumes for carnival week. Poet and prose writer, knowing all European writing, he has defined himself as eminently a *porteño*—the man who lives near the "port," the inhabitant of Buenos Aires. Indeed, he has written with constant lyricism about the poorer and less privileged sections of our metropolis. His "El Almacen Rosado" (The Rose-Colored Grocery Store), his "El Baldio" (The Empty Lot) have become for us as important as if one were a

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national monument, the other a national park. We have become proud of them and we find a charm in them which we never would have discovered had he not written as he did about them.

Jorge Luis Borges says that he loves all things that are poor, naked and ugly, and that you work best when you submit to limitations that you place on your choice of material. Ugliness is sometimes more generous than beauty and Buenos Aires has provided its poet with plentiful occasions for lyricism. Just like every other great city Buenos Aires has its sad and dismal sections. But the artist can transform ugliness and suffering because he knows the underground passages to which so often ugliness and suffering are the secret gates. He shows us the hidden paths leading from them to unforeseen beauty and joy.

As for Eduardo Mallea who wrote so much for *Sur* in the early, difficult years, he belongs to a younger generation and for him Argentina must not only be stripped of the picturesque but must actually be a secret and invisible Argentina. The first story of his that we published had a symbolic title: it was called "Submersion." It was filled with an anxiety to find words which would bring up from their unconscious and hidden existence the problems of the soul and of our blood, of the land and climate of the Argentine. This anxiety is in all Mallea's work; it is given its most concrete expression in his "Historia de una Pasión Argentina." A phrase in the preface to this book recalls this constant motif: "To you who are part of this submerged, deep Argentina, to whose calm and solemn glory is dedicated this book." It is an invisible and authentic Argentina that he exalts and opposes to a visible, fraudulent and superficial Argentina.

In "Man and Superman" Shaw has Tanner say that the symptom which marks our entry into an adult world is not an initiation into love but into moral passion: "The change that came to me was the birth in me of moral passion; and I declare that according to my experience moral passion is the only real passion." When men no longer see certain principles as imposed from without, but as springing from imperative inner conviction, they are truly grown up. I believe this true also of nations.

It is indeed for similar reasons that the moral climate of Mallea's work seems to me so promising. It is at times unbreathable, nebulous and heavy like those spring evenings when there are distant thunder storms along the Rio de la Plata, "when a low and heavy sky is closed down upon us like a lid." Yet even then when Mallea is most painful, I see his work filled with hope—the storm which will sweep clean the air soon will come.

"Historia de una Pasión Argentina" is this discovery of moral passion far more than it is an essay on the development, faults, qualities, desires, ambitions, the grandeur and servitude of a new and still uncertain country. Mallea's book shows clearly the hopes which surround the chrysalis; it marks a stage in our metamorphosis.

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Ricardo Güiraldes, Jorge Luis Borges, Eduardo Mallea—if there were no other names to bring from Argentina to the United States, if I did not have the others living and dead in this Argentina, my land, I still would feel myself sufficiently surrounded, sufficiently rich to speak here abroad of my country.

The Barren Tree

George N. Shuster

AGAIN we have had Good Friday, and the unveiling of the Rood. This is the Tree, we said, on which the Saving of the world was grown. Tree of the knowledge of good and evil; tree of Jesse; tree of man's redeeming: —these three, and what more is possibly to be said of good and evil? But there is also the barren tree. It is the theme of a haunting passage in Mr. Santayana's new book, dealing with the Gospel episode in which the Savior angrily rebukes the fig tree for not bearing figs. This tree, as Santayana observes, was not at fault. It had not wilfully made up its mind to be barren. Nevertheless the Savior found it accursed; and our author goes on to say: "It is not on voluntary naughtiness, not on conscious sins, that divine punishment falls most heavily and irremediably. For such sins there is possible repentance, and they are, after all, groping after a good, however ill-chosen. The final curse falls on constitutional blindness, on self-sufficiency, on obduracy in not recognizing divine opportunities."

These are terrible words. The light that is hidden under a bushel is snuffed out. A man who does not hear is deaf forever. When the city does not realize that her Lord is at the gate, a

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blight is on the streets. Can these things be true? The Christian faith replies with vehemence, and all the great religious philosophies answer assentingly. Not to have clapped one's ears tight when the small voice spoke is the secret spring of all holiness, whether it be that of Socrates or Francis. And so—one asks the question anxiously—may it not be that the desperate evil by which the modern time has suffered and by which it has now irrevocably died, was a curious, half unconscious self-sufficiency? An obduracy which strangely fancied that it was tenderness? Did not men assume that by willing themselves into an intellectual and moral dimension of their own devising they could build more splendid mansions for their egos? It was neither an unpleasant nor a knowingly immoral life they desired to live. In the new realm, music flowed on during the day and the night. The theme was always benevolence, improvement, tolerance, enlightenment. Excelsior! And when there was conversation, it had to do with the equality of human beings. The good things of life—raiment and drink with which the lily of the field is not concerned—were to be meted out to all equally, piece by piece, cup by cup.

And from this new world, so cannily planned, which could be unrestrainedly cruel because in its own way it wanted so much to be kind, God ominously departed, not for the reason that His presence was not desired but because He was relished only as an equal—a fellow-citizen, a co-worker; perhaps a confrère. So that He should become only this and nothing more, notable poets and thinkers defined Him as an extension of humanity's own highest aspirations. Indeed, some said, was He not Himself being slowly born of man's experience during hours when he transcended (superseded) His humanity? Frequently it seemed inconvenient, even embarrassing, to admit that Christ had in fact existed. Efforts were therefore made to interpret the Testament as a Goethean, a Celtic, an Aryan fiction. Yet in the end these attempts seemed not in keeping with the canons of history, of which men were likely to be proud because by acquiescing in such rules they could lend to the study of themselves a soothing rigor, not unlike that which the ballplayer derives from the earnest pursuit of calisthenics. Therefore, it was almost everywhere conceded that the Savior had lived and had been an unusually good man. The Sermon on the Mount was, of course, mere poetry, but it was excellent fantasy and a credit to the human race. At the metamorphosis involved no one seemed to marvel greatly. For how could much importance attach to it in a time when the absence of miracles had led to the working of the greatest of all wonders, namely those of science? God had not merely become man in a new and quite blasphemous sense. He was slowly transformed into one of the aspects of Nature. And since man was gradually conquering nature, there could be little enough doubt that in the end the *anima vagula blandula* would hold Divinity in its hands ere it died.

Let us close our eyes and look back, away from the concentration camps and the piebald dictators of our time. Is it possible to avoid feeling that while men busy at their well-intentioned words scarce noticed, God faded out of human history? Or rather did He not steal gently away, as the radiance goes almost imperceptibly from the twilight sky? In quite the selfsame way the fig tree ceased to bear fruit. It still put forth leaves and limbs—limbs and leaves only. You sense that men, too, in the customary sense of the term, were innocent. Kant turned, and saw the Lord had not yet gone. He ran after the Master, but somehow there was no catching up any longer. Comte said that he would build new tabernacles, not because there was any dearth of those but because the deity to be enshrined would insist upon a liturgy quite his own, harmonious and well instructed.

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Those of our fathers who did not move with the tide, who knelt in their parish fanes beside mission crosses and statues of the Sacred Heart, had neither literature nor philosophy nor art. The share allotted to them in the business of subduing the forces of physical creation was a very small one, indeed. Lord Acton for his part spoke of a tradition of social orderliness which had lain round the youth of Christendom, but the very thought of trying to revive it hardly seemed a practical intellectual enterprise. Others wrote in journals few bothered to read, and set down angry words about the life around them. Inevitably, however, that life coursed even in our fathers' veins. Pasteur measured his faith against that of a Breton peasant. Yet this peasant himself began to spend his Sundays leaning against the bar of a bistro. Generations might have despaired save that of their tribulation and loneliness sanctity was almost profligately born. Saint Thérèse rose like a star above Lisieux. And there appeared a miraculous galaxy of other stars.

Oddly enough, there was an undiscerned affinity between the asceticism of the saints and that of the scientist. No quarrel here. Until the hour of midnight chemist and bacteriologist, physicist and geologist, picked their way through the labyrinth of reality. They followed a rigid ritual in the shrine of truth. But somehow they did not know they did this. I have watched great scientists practice a poignant self-renouncement—have seen their faces resemble the countenances of penitential religious because of the luminous austerity that shone in them. But nobody knew this was so. Nor did more than a few realize how with each new discovery man was being driven away

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from every mooring save that of refuge in the harbor of things as they are.

And so the barren tree has withered. The leaves which have fallen and withered are the sons and daughters of men.

I shall not try to describe what they look like when they die. Let us have just a few words about how they died. There has been no blessing on their going. Today I can still remember how, as a boy, I first encountered death as an enterprise. The hour had come for my great-uncle to go, and all his kin were summoned from far and near so that he could impart to each one a blessing, and so that they might help him on his journey. It was clear that he was setting forth on great business, for which solemn preparation must be made; and though he found it hard to leave, and knew there would be no returning, he laid by the store of such goods and treasures as he might use in that undiscovered country to which his soul was repairing. And for three days after, we stood, as it were, on the pier from which he had sailed, waving our best wishes in the midst of our tears. My great-uncle was an humble though a learned man. But when he set forth he was given the same right of citizenship in the new state as was accorded to kings, and the Church opened unto him all her store.

Now I have read the manuscript of the most horrible book known to me. It is the story of the business of death as conducted by Concentration Camps, Inc. This is not a tale of individual outrages, but rather a carefully written account of killing when the principles of efficiency and the methods of science are intelligently employed. It was possible, at the end, to transform a motley thousand human beings from living, breathing bundles of nerves and blood vessels and bones to fertilizer within a few hours. Nor is that much more horrible than was the enterprise of slaughter as conducted by the masters of the science of bombing. This story has not yet been written. We used to shudder when some fascist commented on the beauty of bursting grenades on the Ethiopian plains. But that is awfully dated. At Warsaw, Dresden and Hiroshima, death really became a wholesale business. We can only hope that the children who perished in the Dresden meadow one awful night will not rise in the bodies which then lay there. For if so Heaven would be hell.

Indeed, is it too much to say that when God departed from human history, the gates of hell were opened? We may well ask that question in penitence and fear. Santayana writes at the close of his book: "The idea of Christ has had many worshippers and has inspired many saints. But it has not converted the world or saved it. The world does not wish to be saved. If we say that the world thereby wills its own damnation, we are merely venting our private displeasure, without frightening the world." These are once more terrible words. We may hope they are not true.

The world will not be converted by the shudder which now runs up and down its spine. That will in the end drive men only to sacrifice all else, even freedom, to self-preservation. I think we shall put shackles on ourselves so that our fingers may be kept away from the atomic bomb. Conversion, saving, will come only when, having sensed that his own miracles have only the ruthless automatism of nature in them, man will pray for the miracle of love which he has not the power to perform. It seems to me that the mind of man is beginning once more so to pray in a humility as unconscious as was its self-sufficiency. It prays with blood on its hands without quite knowing how that blood got there. It prays without knowing to whom it prays. And therewith, perhaps—we can only hope because hope is a virtue—the curse may be lifted again from the barren tree.

The Lights Went Out

TED LE BERTHON

WHEREVER three or four priests of the Society of St. Joseph gather together these days, there is likely to be a discussion whether Shorty will try to "pull off" another night softball game this coming fall, considering what happened last October. They concede that their topic this year has been the night of October 19, 1945.

About 2 o'clock that afternoon a dozen or so of them, of various ages, weights and physical fitness, arrived in Thibodaux, Louisiana (population 8,000—6,000 white, 2,000 colored). They emerged from a half-dozen dusty automobiles in front of St. Luke's church and rectory in the back-of-town Negro section. Fresh from their annual Retreat at Convent, La., they were stopping off to play a night softball game with St. Luke's, a team made up of young Negroes of elementary and high school age. After the game, the Fathers would be off to their Negro mission parishes somewhere in Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi and Alabama. Unfortunately, they were in for trouble.

Scarcely had they stood up, taken deep breaths and stretched their legs after a long ride than Sister Columba of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit rushed over from St. Luke's parochial school, of which she is principal. She drew aside the pastor of St. Luke's, Father John A. McShane, S.S.J., who had been on Retreat with the others. She talked excitedly.

After she walked off, Father McShane told his fellow-priests that "Sister says the Mayor and the Chief of Police don't want this ball game played because it's against the customs of the South to have white and colored on any playing field at one and the same time."

"But, Shorty, we played the game last year," one of

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the Josephites remarked. "They didn't try to stop us then."

Shorty, as most of the Josephites in the area call Father McShane, who is built like a two-story warehouse, nodded. That was just the trouble. Between them, Mayor Charles E. Delas and Chief of Police P. J. O'Neil had convinced Sister Columba, during his absence on Retreat, that the white townspeople—"and, after all, 75 percent of them, Sister, are Catholics"—had never gotten over that 1944 game, had deeply resented it, had considered that "a fast one had been pulled on them." So when they had seen Father McShane's handbills advertising the second annual game, they had drummed up a delegation to go to the city authorities and demand that the game be cancelled. Let Father McShane substitute two colored teams. The nun's argument that, after all, the white team would be composed entirely of priests engaged in evangelizing the Negroes broke against stubborn minds. This was the South. Sooner or later, Father McShane had to learn that once and for all.

Father McShane told Sister Columba that the city authorities were taking the game altogether too seriously. Then he got first the Mayor, then the Chief of Police, on the phone. Told them he was determined to play the game. There was no law on the Louisiana statute books or in the municipal code of Thibodaux specifically forbidding interracial athletics. There was a popular taboo, a regional custom, but nothing warranting police or court interference. What was more, Father McShane had paid out good, hard money for the advertising handbills. And above all, weren't they Catholics? Wasn't Chief O'Neil, in fact, a Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus? Hadn't they read the present Holy Father's encyclical, "On the Unity of the Human Family?" And did they realize what Father McShane and other Josephite priests were up against in trying to bring Negroes to the Faith? Did they, for instance, know that whereas virtually all the Negroes in Louisiana once had been Catholics, only 20 percent now were? Mightn't the attitude of white Catholics be in great part responsible? Weren't communists spreading reports around that while priests might say Mass for Negroes, and administer the Sacraments, they weren't given to fraternizing with them socially? And wasn't this annual night softball game, possible only when the Josephites were en route home from the Retreat, the answer which showed where priests stood towards Negroes or anyone else?

The Mayor was very sorry. Frankly, he would be politically washed up, as far as any chance of ever being re-elected, if he let the game go on. And this was the South. The Chief of Police struck a more chilling note. There'd be violence, possibly bloodshed, if Father insisted on being foolhardy enough to buck the white townspeople. This was the South.

"But listen to this, Chief."

Father McShane read his handbill over the phone. He chortled. Thought it was funny, even if he had written it. It was captioned "Big Softball Game" in boxcar letters, "like it's the final game in the World Series, Chief." Then it went on about the bad wind, bloated waistlines, fallen arches and general athletic incompetence of Fathers Flanagan, Crowley, Farraher, Fitzpatrick, Hennessey, Stripe, Conroy, Dodd, Hardman, Bouchie, O'Connell, Cassidy, Barrett, Callahan and Kelleher. It concluded that the St. Luke's aggregation had "the Padres" well scouted, and was not impressed. But it should be worth 25 cents to adults, a dime to children, to watch St. Luke's triumph.

Didn't the Chief think the townspeople would take it all in the spirit of wholesome fun and a night's recreation? And did the Chief possibly think anyone would lay violent hands on priests?

The Chief wasn't taking any chances.

But couldn't the whites just stay away? Why interfere in something happening in a Negro neighborhood, back of town, where ordinarily they'd never think of coming? And did most of them really care very much? Weren't there a few financial bigshots raising a hue and cry because they were out to discredit a priest who'd been telling colored parishioners to demand decent wages?

The Chief ventured no opinion. All he knew was that this was the South.

"Well, Chief, we're playing the game," Father McShane announced with hard finality.

★

About a half hour later, the front doorbell of St. Luke's rectory rang, and there stood the Very Reverend Monsignor A. F. Ravoire, pastor of St. Joseph's, the handsomest edifice, and the most commanding, in Thibodaux and commonly known as "the white Catholic Church."

Monsignor was to the point. The Mayor had phoned him about Father's determination to play the softball game. Msgr. Ravoire smiled. The Mayor had thought he might be able to make Father McShane listen to reason. Father McShane was a Northerner. But this was the South. And there might be a scandal. Also, the Mayor suspected that Father McShane had some kind of complex on this racial equality thing, and wondered if the other Josephite priests were as enthusiastic about the game, or had perhaps been bedazzled into it by Father McShane.

The other Josephites were called in. Unanimously they assured Monsignor that they were most anxious to play. They believed they knew the Negro better than "white priests in white work." No matter how many Negroes yessed white men, the overwhelming majority felt at heart that Christianity and segregation were opposed ways of life. The Negro wanted fraternalism, not paternalism, from those who claimed to love and understand him. Negroes didn't want to be loved from a safe distance. Yes, they were behind Shorty 100 percent.

Msgr. Ravoire was impressed. Said he admired their courage as priests, their steadfastness to principle. But this was the South. There'd be trouble. If trouble came, he'd be on the Josephites' side. "And let's not evade the fact, Fathers, that there'll be plenty of trouble." He left looking unhappy and preoccupied.

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Just preceding game time in the evening, there was Benediction in St. Luke's. The church was crowded. The small sanctuary bulged with priests.

After Benediction, the priests changed into old shirts, duck pants and baseball caps and went to the playing field, washed with light from powerful arcs high up on a pole. The young Negroes came on in work pants and white jerseys lettered St. L. in green. Deferentially, they let the priests take the field first for practice while they warmed up on the sidelines.

Father McShane, in broad white trousers and undershirt, revealing big arms like Pop Eye the Sailor's, came walking towards home plate, lugging three bats and two softballs. He waved to some parishioners in the low, three-row bleachers. Then he noticed a cluster of white men half way down towards first base. Among them was Chief of Police O'Neil. Father McShane dropped the bats and balls and walked over.

"Good evening, Chief, it's nice to see you."

"Better get down to business, Father. This game isn't going to be played."

"Oh yes it is!"

"Oh no it isn't!"

An argument began. The other priests began walking in from the field to stand close. The Negro players stopped playing catch and went over and sat down on a bench.

Chief O'Neil pointed to one of the men with him and told the priests to take note that he wore spiked shoes and a climbing belt, was a municipal light and power employee, and was going to climb the light pole and put out the lights the moment the first man came to bat in the first half of the first inning. He told the priest that all of his men were armed in case anyone tried to make trouble. Father McShane observed a tall, brawny man with his arms folded. The man was glaring hard at him.

"Are you trying to scare someone?" Father McShane called out. Then he turned to the other priests. "Get those folded arms, Fathers! Look at those big muscles! Is he funny or is he funny?"

The Chief nodded to the municipal employee and he started climbing the pole.

"Well, this is contemptible," Father McShane snapped. He shook a finger under the Chief's nose.

"Come on, Shorty, they have us on the spot," one of the other Josephites pleaded.

On the church porch, some 75 feet behind home plate, Sister Columba had assembled some small Negro children, and now she was starting them on a rhythmic recitation, in their shrill treble, of a Rosary. Against that background she walked forward and asked Chief O'Neil to tell the man to come down off the pole. She reminded him that he was Irish and a Catholic, that she had only recently come from Ireland, that the Irish, like the Negroes, were a persecuted people, and that in most parts of the South, Catholics were looked down on. She begged him to let the game proceed.

He merely grumbled that this was the South.

"He's no Irishman!" exploded Father McShane. He clenched his fists and bellied up to the Chief.

"Don't you lay a hand on me, Father!"

The lights suddenly went out and all anyone heard were the children saying the Rosary as darkness swallowed up the playing field.

Cafe Chantant

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

WHEN WE left Middlebury, it began to snow, although it was the twenty-ninth of April. Yet since the sky seemed light—occasionally the sun would break through—and since the wind was in the northwest, we did not take too dim a view of the weather. In Burlington they said the road along the Richelieu River was good. Quebec—something over 200 miles away—seemed a reasonable goal for a day's driving, even supposing the snow kept up. But once past St. Albans and the Canada-Vermont border, things went steadily from bad to worse. There is a very flat, low-lying stretch there, as far north as St. Jean-Iberville, which must once have been lake bottom, and where the water-table is so high the winter frost always plays havoc with such unenduring matter as a concrete pavement.

There would be a few hundred feet of beautifully smooth surface, then suddenly a series of jagged craters and crevasses enough to break any axle or spring unless you negotiated them at five miles an hour. And that went on, to the accompaniment of an increasingly howling wind, an increasing tumble of snow, for a good thirty miles. Beyond Iberville, which is where you begin straitly to follow the Richelieu, the pavement petered out entirely, and the sky—let alone the windshield—became less and less penetrable. No birds on any tree; a smiling countryside turned dour and bleak; and even the old churches and seignories of that long flat land unattractive and forbidding. Now, between villages, where a few vestiges of macadam jolted the car irregularly, it was jolted with a regular rhythm for miles on muddy washboards, and all that stood between you and the freshets of the river were a few alders and hazelnuts, no higher than your waist.

A man and a woman on horseback came wetly trotting toward us, a curé, running to look into his mailbox, a farmer's wife peering out of a dark window—that was all of mankind. The rest was mud and dead fields and bony trees, bending in the wind, and collecting none of the snowflakes. This for mile after mile, for perhaps another thirty. So when the heroic pylons that lift the power line across the St. Lawrence emerged against the sky, and we knew we were near Sorel, the day was spent, with Quebec still more than a hundred miles away.

Sorel is a peculiar town. It lies at the confluence of the Richelieu and the St. Lawrence, and has always built ships, repaired ships, wintered ships. The ancient residence of Lower Canada's royal governors is black with the smoke from steamships now moored but a few feet away. And thus Sorel, with its endless docks and marine railways and grain-elevators and ship chandlers, is a strange mixture of small inland industrial town and gaudy seaport. It has its block of honky-tonks, with radios blaring

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to the street. It has its sedate town square, and its ramshackle wooden workers' dwellings. It is noisy and dirty and no place to spend a night if you can help it.

But at Sorel there is a ferry, crossing the main stream of the St. Lawrence, which here branches into a delta before broadening into Lake St. Peter ("The wind she blow on Lac Saint Pierre, she blow one hurricane," as one remembers Mr. Drummond). Leaving this ferry one crosses on wooden causeways over the other streams of the river and the intervening islands until one reaches Berthier, formerly seignorial seat of a French officer of the same name, now site of an Eddy match factory, an eighteenth century baroque church, some smaller industries, the mercantile establishments serving a fine stretch of farmland.

We caught the six-thirty ferry, together with a hundred or more men and women through with their day's work in Sorel and now going back to their homes on the north shore. They surrounded our car as the boat pushed across stream, the men strong-faced and gay, the women keeping much to themselves, sheltered from the snow under the ferry's small superstructure. At the northern terminus the younger men swarmed the rail before the vessel had been made fast, neatly vaulting from rail to pier over the intervening feet of muddy, swirling and bitter cold water, and among them there was one young fellow in blue jeans who startlingly put me in mind of a red pom-pommed sailor from the battleship *Richelieu* I had seen one winter's night in a wartime New York bar.

★

Berthier has a good, simple hotel, Le Manoir, looking across the old highway upon a lovely grassy terrace which skirts the north stream of the St. Lawrence. And as we went to our rooms—providentially there were rooms—we noticed a door labeled "Café-Club." That seemed promising, for by then a drink was thoroughly desirable. It was not long before we explored what lay beyond that door, and discovered that it led to a large room, evidently tacked onto the hotel, containing a dance floor, chromium chairs and tables for well over a hundred people and a very fancy orchestra dais with a large banner suspended above it bearing an inscription: "The Brow's Family Ensemble." Each of the eight seats for the players bore a smaller banner, and each banner wore the name of a Brow: Papa, Mama, Denise, Lise, Rita, Marie, Odette.

To encounter anything like this in a small French Canadian town was wonder enough, to see it bare and empty, and to drink a couple of vile concoctions passing for Martinis (at least they were warming) in its presence led to inquiries. Yes, it was a family orchestra. They played every weekday night from seven to eleven-thirty, and on Sundays they gave an afternoon concert. They were well worth hearing and were very popular.

So hear them we did. Mama, who clearly rules the dovecote, is about thirty and strums a bass fiddle. Papa stoops over a clarinet-saxophone. The smallest of the fair daughters—certainly not a day over six—works the traps, another plucks a mandolin and the remaining three, including the singing star, Denise, shift from violin to banjo as some inner law of the music demands. The results possess their fascination. All the chromium chairs were occupied, nine-tenths by men, and the chromium tables were piled with quart bottles of ale (all ale and beer is sold out by eight o'clock) or with highball glasses. Everything is very subdued, the men silent or talking quietly, a few girls in couples, or in mixed parties of at least six, quiet and self-contained, smiling but never strident. Until ten o'clock, no one seems to think of dancing; they simply listen and drink and smoke. Then a few hardy couples venture; a few more, until there are perhaps a dozen in all very gravely and decorously moving about the floor. Gradually we became aware that among them are several of those we saw coming home from work on the ferry. In one corner an obvious lumberjack dozes contentedly. Ten or twelve white-coated waiters produce drinks, and by the door the hotel manager beams seraphically, an ugly man with a head a little to put you in mind of Socrates. He moves over toward our table. "And what do you think of our young artistes? Are they not marvelous? . . ."

The Brows are, indeed, an extraordinary ensemble. Mother, one suspects, is an exacting mistress, not unacquainted with the metronome and the rules of *bel canto*. The three violin bows move up and down with almost alarming unison, as though long rehearsed by a Balieff for a dance of the wooden soldiers. All of the girls are dressed alike, in a modest green uniform, and never do they hesitate for a moment over their routines. Sometimes Denise sings solo, in a lovely low soprano, sometimes she is joined at the microphone by two of her sisters, the younger so short she must stand upon a wooden box to be on a level with the other two. But what is strangest of all is the tempo.

A tune would begin. It would seem vaguely familiar, yet elusive. What on earth is this? Never—or hardly ever—could you count it to three-four time. The tempo is clear, but strange. Then, gradually, you recognize the song. Perhaps it is "If I Loved You." Denise sings it solo. Never a slur, good attack. But also never a word emerges, so that you can't surely make out whether she is singing in French or English. Suddenly everything shifts—tempo, mood. The music is clearly eighteenth century and jiggy, such as you have heard many a village fiddler play, such as "Turkey in the Straw" is. Chris, better placed to see the dance floor, leans over to me and says, "Look! They're jitterbugging!" I stretch my head around. Jitterbugging indeed! The people are performing the standard changes of an old square dance, turning, changing partners, facing right, facing left. Then, after a few moments, another shift, and little Lise, the six-year-old drummer, is singing "Marzey Doats . . ."

Outside it is still blowing, still snowing. The beer and ale bottles are all empty. The lumberjack has been awakened by one of the waiters and, apologetically alcoholic, is frantically offering cigarettes to everyone in his vicinity. At the table next to us, rapt, alone, sits the young worker who on the ferry had so reminded me of the other young man from the *Richelieu*. And the Brow family files out for the last intermission, the smaller girls chatting in the hotel parlor with each a bottle of coca cola and each a package of molasses popcorn.

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Communications

INDIA'S NEED

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Experts say that from 10 to 20,000,000 people in India face certain death from starvation before this year is out. Domestic crops have failed because of a succession of catastrophes; a cyclone, a tidal wave and the failure of the monsoon rains. Foreign purchases depend on Combined Food Board allocations—but since commitments already made to UNRRA for other countries are not being met, how can further allocations be made for India?

Only private action can help save the lives of these people. And that means food from America. Unlike other foreign countries there is not a single private agency working in the United States for Indian relief. Nor do the people of India have relatives here who can send food packages, etc. The War Relief Services of the National Catholic Welfare Conference have just allotted a first food shipment for India—five hundred tons of wheat to be distributed by Archbishop Roberts, S.J., of Bombay. This is a trickle compared to the actual need (estimated at two million tons this year).

As food supplies in the provinces of Bombay, Madras and Mysore will be exhausted by the end of June without shipments from abroad, money should be sent at once to one or more of the following missionary organizations which are in a position to render effective aid:

The Medical Mission Sisters
8400 Pine Road
Fox Chase
Philadelphia 11, Pa.

Patna Mission Service
1110 South May Street
Chicago 7, Illinois

Holy Cross Fathers
Bengal Mission
Catholic University, Washington 5, D. C.

Funds so designated will be used for powdered milk and eggs, rice, canned baby foods and other concentrated foodstuffs. For instance, $12.54 will buy enough powdered milk to make 120 quarts of liquid milk for babies. Other foods cost in proportion. Freight charges are very low for shipments in bulk ($10. for 250 pounds). A dollar could not stretch farther or do more good. Here is a place for immediate action.

ELEANORA CALDERON,
Committee of Catholics for Emergency Food Relief to India.

Our readers' attention is also called to the Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe, 50 Broad Street, New York 4, N. Y. This non-profit enterprise, organized by twenty-four American agencies engaged in foreign relief, delivers with remarkable speed standard thirty-pound packages (40,000 calories) to designated persons—or will even itself select a needy individual—in Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, Italy, Norway, Poland and the Netherlands for $15.00 per package. These packages, already overseas, were originally designed by the Army to feed American soldiers in groups of ten. The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, 109 East 38th Street, New York 16, N. Y., is currently accepting contributions for China, where famine is at present on the rampage in several provinces.—THE EDITORS.

THE HUMANITIES IN HAITI

Dorchester, Mass.

TO the Editors: In regard to "The Humanities in Haiti": it would be unfair to Mr. Mercier if not to his subject if I were to suggest hasty platitudes as a substitute for sanguinary perspiration in the solution of Haiti's problems.

It is his approach with which I differ, and his conclusions inevitably proceeding from such an approach. Considering the plight of the masses with objectivity, whether they be in Haiti or New York, is to risk overlooking certain poignant and related phenomena. This objectivity results in strange gatherings of hoarded wealth, hoarded genius, hoarded talent, hoarded education, and (strangely enough) hoarded holiness, seated around tables discussing the lack of these virtues in the masses. It is a blood-bank weeping over the prevalence of anemia.

At one time there were such things as cultured peasants, technically efficient poets, poor governors, and well educated beggars. That was before a man felt justified in living as became his income rather than his vocation.

The solution (in part) to the problem in Haiti is to put the blood of the republic back into the veins weakened by lack of it. Such an infusion would result necessarily in some men of belles-lettres living voluntarily in mud huts, and the elite distributing their talents alone and unadmired. Thus would they discard the modern technique of thinking their way out of a problem, for a method more in keeping with their catholicity; of loving their way into it.

When there are Haitian philosophers with calloused hands, and clubs for peasants, then perhaps the subject of technocracy may be approached with prayer and hyssop.

ED WILLOCK.

The Stage & Screen

This, Too, Shall Pass

THERE can be no question of the sincerity of the motive behind Don Appell's play concerning anti-Semitism and, unfortunately, no question of the fact that he has neither written nor directed it very well. The story of a Middle-Western clubwoman whose determined prejudices cause the death of her son when she refuses to allow the daughter of the household to marry the boy's Jewish war-buddy, the action starts off rather like a merry-go-round, only to slow down well before the end. I think Sam Wanamaker's simple, restrained performance

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as the Jewish boy definitely worth the ticket, but otherwise the unintentional irony of the title seems rather to underline the fate of the Belasco this season. (*At the Belasco.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Emotin' All Over the Place

ADMIRERS of Bette Davis can get set for a Davis binge. In her new film, *"A Stolen Life,"* she plays two rôles and that adds up to a lot of Bette—what with mannerisms and all. However Miss Davis handles both rôles well. The girls are twins—physically alike as two proverbial peas, but artistically and mutually as different as Miss Davis's wide range of acting will allow. Kate is a likable, lonely, sensitive artist in love with a young engineer who works in a lighthouse to think things out. But he should have stood in the lighthouse, because once he gets on the mainland in Massachusetts, Patricia, the other twin who can only be described as a five-letter meanie, gets her hooks in him; and before he knows it, this nice, rather shy dope, who likes to think, is married to Pat, who likes a gay life. Kate suffers in silence and resorts to painting; Pat leads her husband on a merry chase. Then one day while the two girls are sailing, a squall blows up and Pat is drowned and Kate pretends she's Pat. This leads to some really intense drama, because then Kate finds out what an awful person Pat really was. And the nice engineer, who can't be very smart for all his lighthouse thinking, is dumbfounded at the change in his wife. I'm afraid this is another of those movies labeled a woman's picture. Curtis Bernhardt's direction is leisurely with all the emphasis on Bette Davis who wears attractive clothes and runs the gamut. The men are types and shadowy at that: Glenn Ford as the contemplative engineer, Dane Clark as a very Bohemian New York artist who tries to help Kate when she's down in the dumps, Walter Brennan as a salty New England character, Charles Ruggles as Kate's sympathetic cousin. I won't go into discussion of the English version of "A Stolen Life" which came out in 1939 and was impressive for the fine performances of Elizabeth Bergner. It had the advantage, however, of coming to the point much more quickly and subtly. This new version drags on interminably, but is helped by stunning photography of outdoor sets and trick photography.

Evidently the movies are hard up for plot material in these post-war days: what with remaking old films and producing new films that are like old ones. *"Her Kind of Man"* is a picture about the Prohibition Era. Warner Brothers produced many like it some ten years ago; and this one, made by the same studio, compares favorably with the best. Directed with a fast pace by Frederick de Cordova, who uses cinema symbols well, marked by strong dialogue, this film tells the story of a hard-boiled gambler (a mean character effectively played by Zachary Scott), a New York columnist (Dane Clark) and a night club singer (Janis Paige) whom both love. The Prohibition background is full of shooting, tense gambling scenes, some nostalgic songs of the period and even a baby-faced killer and a crime-does-not-pay moral. As good as this production is, one wonders why it was made at this

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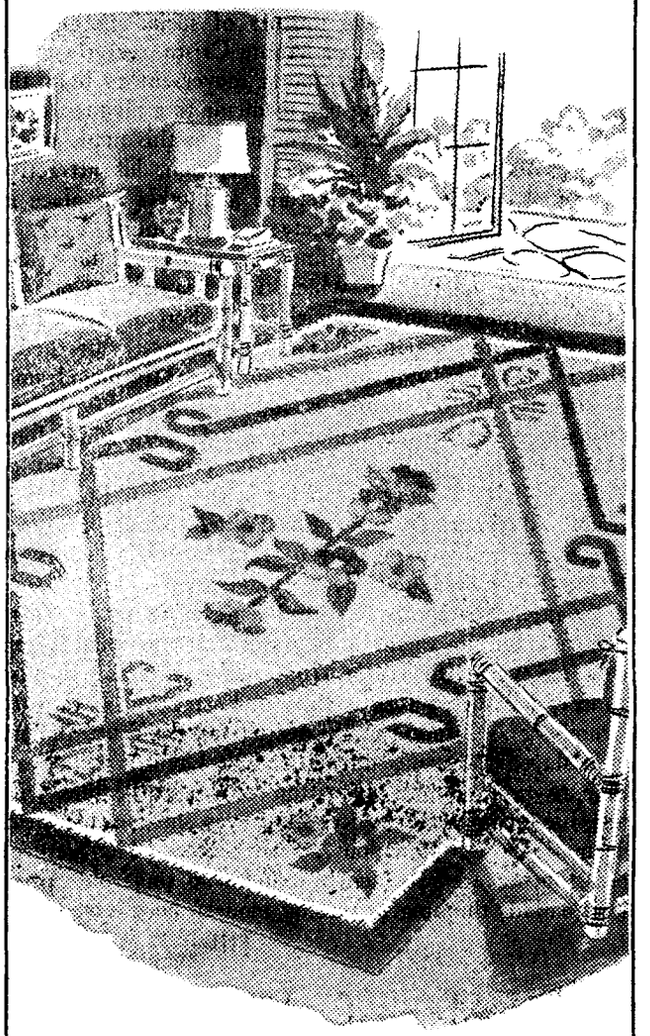

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time—unless the trend-conscious Warners are predicting a revival of gangster themes in movies or are warning against the return of a post-war crime wave.

"The Wife of Monte Cristo" practically gives away its story in its title—although this cloak-and-sword drama does try to include some touches of social significance. The very wealthy Count of Monte Cristo, secretly "The Avenger," heads an underground movement to fight the politicians who are selling bad medicine to a plague-ridden public. After the Count is wounded in this noble work, he goes into hiding. To avert suspicion, his attractive wife dons his "Avenger" costume and takes his place in the raids against these racketeers overrunning Paris in 1832. This leads to thrilling chases, daring duels and fancy dress parties at which the beautiful Countess (Lenore Aubert) puts the wicked big-shots in their place. There's enough action to hold one's interest, but there's also far too much talk for such an adventure melodrama. A surprise bit of casting is found in Martin Kosleck (usually a nazi villian) playing the Count, while John Loder (usually a hero) plays the crooked Prefect of Police. Perhaps more surprising is the credit line which reads: Alexandre Dumas' "The Wife of Monte Christo," screenplay by Dorcas Cochran from an original story by Franz Rosenwald and Edgar G. Ulmer.

"Tangier" is another spy-and-chase affair set in North Africa. But its theme is so tired and stale that it gets tiresome even with Maria Montez appearing as a Spanish dancer, and such actors as Preston Foster and J. Edward Bromberg as suspects in the search for the cruel Balizar who slayed thousands during Spain's Civil War. From time to time, Louise Allbritton brightens the plot with her convincing performances—but even she goes too melodramatic in the ridiculous suicide scene. The picture's best touches are provided by Sabu who sings old American ballads thinking he's doing modern boogie woogie.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

A Grammar of Motives. Kenneth Burke. Prentice-Hall. $5.00.

DURING the latter half of the nineteenth century a cross-pollination took place between philosophy and the sciences. The results of this hybridization have often been dubbed "the bastard sciences"—sociology, anthropology, and economics are of these the best known. But a better name than "bastard" would be "nectarine." For there is no real taint of illegitimacy attached to any of them, nothing to suggest an intellectual roll in the hay. Like the nectarine, that delicious cross between peach and plum, these sturdy burgeons inherit the qualities of both parents, yet possess definite characteristics of their own.

One of the most recent and most promising of "nectarines" is semantics. Mr. Burke describes it as a cross between logic and grammar, or between logic and dialectic (for Mr. Burke, dialectic is "the employment of the possibilities of linguistic transformation.")

That semantics is today a "popular" subject, instead of merely a scientific one, is largely due to Mr. I. A. Richards, of Cambridge (England). His provocative book "The Meaning of Meaning," and his later "The Principles of Literary Criticism" did much to explain what has now become the modern norm of thinking about words. In this country it is to Alfred Korzybski and his Institute of Semantics at Chicago, that this "nectarine" owes the preliminary shoveling away of loose thinking, the spadework, that is essential for a science if it is to take solid root.

But Mr. Burke is not only concerned with the re-estimation of words and their relation to meaning. His approach to semantics, while in many ways Aristotelian, is also "essentially scientist, an approach to language in terms of knowledge." His "Grammar of Motives" is the first volume of a trilogy on human relations. The two succeeding parts, on which he is now working, will be called a "Rhetoric of Motives" and a "Symbolic of Motives." The "Rhetoric" is scheduled for publication in 1947.

For Mr. Burke, semantics not only are closely related to logic and to dialectics, but also to esthetics. He takes, as it were, the parallel straight lines of Aristotle's "Ethics" and the "Poetics" and, placing himself in an infinity where they meet, discusses their long journey. He groups all human motives under five headings: act, scene, agent, agency, purpose: what was done, where, by whom, how and why?

Part I of his "Grammar of Motives" deals with the "Ways of Placement," with container and thing contained, with the antimonies of definition, and their scope and reduction. Part II tidily lays the main philosophers or schools of philosophy into their correct drawers in Mr. Burke's pentad-bureau. Part III deals with dialectic itself—first he discusses the dialectic of Constitutions, and in particular of the Constitution of the United States, then dialectics in general, with especial study of the mind-body, being-nothing, and action-passion pairs. For appendices he adds a study of symbolic action in Keats's "Ode to a Grecian Urn" and a note on motives and motifs in the poetry of Marianne Moore.

The resulting book is very like Gertrude Stein's classic description of Paris: "peaceful and exciting." It is peaceful, because it is a serious study of creation, a process that takes place only in utter peace; it is exciting because, unlike the atomic bomb, the Moscow conference, the General Motors strike or the starvation of Europe, the things Mr. Burke discusses are ends, not means. There is a point "at the still center of the turning world" where Barbara in figure one or the proposition of Euclid forever adumbrate the procession of the Trinity, and Mr. Burke shows how quickly, and with what terrifying certainty, you arrive at that point once you begin to think. Thought is most perilous: no wonder the Japanese condemned men to death for "dangerous thoughts"—for *all* thought is dangerous.

And words—the simple silly words that make up M. Jourdain's prose, or yours, or mine, are fearful things too. They are elemental, like water which, and at a certain temperature, feels the same whether it is boiling hot or icy cold. This paradox Mr. Burke brilliantly illustrates by the history of the word "substance." It is the most important member of what he calls the "Stance" family—words that come from the Sanskrit *stha,* to stand. All such words derive from a concept of place, or placement. "One could surely build a whole philosophic universe," he adds, "by tracking down the

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ramifications of this one root," And, returning to "substance" he points out that the pun Locke made "must be taken seriously, for though the word is often used to designate what some thing or agent intrinsically is, it is a scenic word. Literally, a thing's substance would be something that stands beneath, to support it. Here, obviously, is a strategic moment, an alchemic moment, where momentous miracles of transformation can take place. For here, the intrinsic and the extrinsic can change places." And, elsewhere, he writes "men seek for vocabularies that will be faithful *reflections* of reality. To this end, they must develop vocabularies that are *selections* of reality, and any selection of reality must, in certain circumstances, function as a *deflection* of reality." Here, as Mr. T. S. Eliot says, we go round the mulberry bush, not with a bang but a whimper.

And so to Spinoza, and to his theory that all definition is negation: *omnis determinatio est negatio*. Of course the Church always knew that: knew that God cannot be described except by what He is not; knew that no doctrine can ever be defined except negatively: if any man denies that God is Three divine persons in one substance, let him be anathema; if any man say Francis is not a saint, let him be under the ban.

All gods are substances, insists Mr. Burke, and he gives, as "act" words Christ's "I am the Way" (*hodos*) meaning also *tao* or *yoga*: "I represent a system of right acts." So conclusively, in fact, does he prove this particular point, that he thereby makes the fifth member of his pentad redundant. For his "act" also includes purpose: Christ is the Way *by* which He wills men should go *to* eternal life: the purpose is implicit. So we are back at the circle, the serpent-eating-its tail, the recurring decimal point. . . .

What unifies, also separates, and Mr. Burke admirably makes also this point. What he calls "God-terms" or end-terms, are examples of this law. And, after God, money is the most important of these terms, and is therefore, the most deadly of all *ersatzer** for God. Money "endangers religion in that money can serve as a universal symbol, the unitary ground of all action. And it endangers religion" "not in the dramatistic way of a 'tempter' but in its quiet rational way as a substitute, that performs its mediatory rôle more efficiently, more parsimoniously, with less waste motion." And since money thus substitutes technically or scientifically for the godhead as a public principle, "do we not see the results of this substitution in the fact that Protestantism, arising in response to the growth of occupational diversity, trade, and the naturally increased dependence on the use of money, stressed on the contrary the rôle of the godhead as a private principle?"

(This truth has been somewhat neglected since it was first magnificently emphasized in R. H. Tawney's "Religion and the Rise of Capitalism.") Elsewhere Mr. Burke notes that André Gide is "profoundly if perversely a Protestant. In 'The Counterfeiters' the relationships between the important characters are symbolized in monetary terms." What Mr. Burke calls the "transubstantiation" of money, "from its function as an agency of economic action into a function as the ground or purpose of economic action" raises the query: may not the godhead itself, as easily as any other God-term, suffer the

*"If religion is by definition a sort of Rome towards which all roads lead, money likewise has this unifying attribute."

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same paradoxical transmutation? And he goes on to show how, by Occam's razor (or the "law of parsimony") this becomes so: when two circumferences are matched, the wider set of terms has "multiplied entities beyond necessity. The wood burns because God willed laws according to which wood burns when we light it, but soon we stingily say, 'it burns because we lit it.'"

Mr. Burke's discussion of William James's objections to pantheism—that it denies the Creation—is profound and searching. The Creation has the form of the most complete act: it is the unending moment wherein being, *ex nihilo,* out of nothing everlastingly produces becoming. For us, Creation is the Ground, not God. Here Mr. Burke is so right, and Mr. Huxley so wrong (*both* Mr. Huxleys, by the way, grandfather and grandson.) For, as William James observes, there can be no *necessary* relation between Creator and created: it is essentially an arbitrary one. "The Creator must be the all, and the act by which the creature is set over against him has its motive within the creative circumference." On a minor scale, as Mr. Burke comments later "and almost imperceptibly the same is true of artistic creation, which also is substantitive, constitutive, quite as was God's creative act."

His snug fitting of the world's philosophies into his pentad is brilliantly done, and as delightful as a child's game: the red bricks into the red box, the blue into the blue. He is again most illuminating when he comes to Spinoza, whose naturalism, he says: "characterizes to perfection the great watershed moment in Western thought when men were narrowing the scope of their terminologies as per the Occamite law of parsimony. Theologically, this amounted to the narrowing of the circumference from a scene comprising both creation and creator, to a scene comprising creation alone. And, since the creation had already been enacted, such a narrowing of the scenic frame meant in turn simply an examination of the world's constitution. Dramatistically, this narrowing meant the shift from a poetic or moralistic vocabulary of action and passion to a scientific or mechanistic vocabulary of motion."

Perhaps the best thing in the whole book, however, is Mr. Burke's account of Marxism, that "idealism by antithesis." Both this and his appreciation of Lenin as philosopher are admirably clear and forceful.

Mr. Burke insists on using "dramatistic" for "dramatic," scientistic for "scientific." He doubtless has the best of semantic reasons, but the result in the reader's mental ear is a curious hissing sound, as of an enraged gander. Another trick Mr. Burke should outgrow is the puffing up of a paradox into a pun. It inevitably soon suffers the fate of the frog that would blow itself to the cow's dimensions in the fable. ("I believe that the true mettle of a philosopher is shown in what he can say about nothing. Any tyro can talk about something. But it takes a really profound thinker to say profound things about nothing.")

Luckily, Mr. Burke falls under his own definition of a tyro: he has a great deal to say about something.

ANNE FREMANTLE.

Lafcadio Hearn. Vera McWilliams. Houghton. $3.00.

OUT OF THE strange blends of blood, out of the welter of environment and experience, out of the manifold and exotic scenes amid which he moved, came the curious work of Lafcadio Hearn. In spite of his biographers, the words of his friends and enemies, his well-wishers and detractors, he remains shrouded in a mystery that has yet to be explained. It is probably as he wished: he held something aloof and removed from his closest friends.

The story of his heterogeneous origins has been told numerous times; of his Irish father (in whose blood ran a gypsy strain); of his Greco-Maltese mother; of his birth in legend-haunted Santa Maura set in the Ionian sea; of his bewildered, accident-cursed days in Dublin, Tramore, France, London, New York, Cincinnati, New Orleans, Saint Pierre, Matsue, Kummata, and Tokyo. His religious and intellectual vicissitudes make up as odd a pattern as his progress over the face of the globe. His first religious instruction was in the Greek Orthodox tradition; then it became Catholic; after a reading of Herbert Spencer, he embraced the ideas set forth in the *First Principles.* These ideas he succeeded in fusing with the oriental doctrines of Buddhism and Shintoism. After marrying a Japanese woman, he reared a family of Eurasian children, died, and was buried with Buddhist rites.

To tease out the separate ethnic and cultural nerves which made up the man is a task remaining to be done. Mrs. McWilliams has made a promising beginning. Above all things, hers is an entertaining book, replete with anecdote and alive to the picturesque values Hearn's life abundantly yielded.

Of particularly timely interest are the chapters dealing with Hearn's days in Japan. Trained in journalism to observe closely and to report clearly, inclined sympathetically toward the Japanese, he was in a position to record for us the state of the Empire during critical periods in its transition from the old order to the new. Had Mrs. McWilliams evaluated Hearn's masterpiece and last work, "Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation," her book would have been the richer. Did, for instance, the State Department make use of Hearn's work in gauging our late enemy? Was Hearn's interpretation valid in the light of subsequent developments? Was his estimate of the psychology of the Japanese correct?

One leaves Mrs. McWilliams's book with the feeling that Hearn has, after all, little to offer beyond his engaging tales, his lush descriptive sketches, and the jewelled passages in his travel books. But it may well be that a future and more critically-minded student will reveal to us that shadowy and obscure secret which Hearn so persistently concealed.

CHARLES DUFFY.

The United States Moves Across the Pacific. Kenneth Scott Latourette. Harper. $2.00.

IT HAS TAKEN fifty years to make clear the implications and consequences of a westward tide of immigration, turning into an irresistible trans-continental forward surge, and becoming (after absorption of the American continent) an uncontrolled, doom-driven "Drang nach Westen" till it crashes on the level mud-beaches of China and against the rocks and cliffs of Asiatic Russia. It is a convincing picture to anyone who, like the present reviewer, has seen it happen.

Fifty years ago, he was assigned by Grover Cleveland to understand the causes of "an explosion in the Pacific Basin which may easily be fatal to us, because we are not handling things right." To Cleveland, the "Pacific Basin" meant: "all the continental coast of eastern Asia; all the continental coast of western America, from Alaska to the Cape; all the islands, as far south as Australia and

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as far north as Russia—and nobody knows anything at all about Russia (1896!). It is both Atlantic and Pacific, Europe and Asia. Russia might be the unifier of Asia and Europe . . . or the cause of fatal explosion." "Japan and China can cause explosion. Russian explosion, unless it is the healer, can be greater."

What he was also saying was that every great act carries with it consequences at least as great as the act itself, and that we were not (and still are not, for that matter) following through the consequences of our own acts. Men like William Seward in the fifties saw the progression of the "Manifest Destiny," but not where it was to lead us at Pearl Harbor. Commodore Matthew Perry, in the same years, was more explicit: "It seems to me that the people of America will . . . extend their domination and power until they shall have . . . placed the Saxon race upon the eastern shores of Asia . . . I think, too, that her great rival (Russia) will stretch forth her power to the coasts of China and Siam; and thus the Saxon and the Cossack will meet . . . Will that be in friendship? I fear not! The . . . exponents of freedom and absolutism (Czarist Russia) must meet at last, and then will be fought the mighty battle . . . for on its issue will depend the freedom or the slavery of the world . . . that battle must sooner or later be fought." (From the version quoted in "Black Ships Off Japan," by Arthur Walworth, which is the story of the opening of Japan by Perry in 1853.) Perry speaks of the islands of the Pacific as "offshoots from us" "rather than, strictly speaking, colonies." "How and in what way the aborigines will be disposed of . . . cannot be known at the present time; but that they are doomed . . . is as certain as the melancholy fate of our own red brethren."

Dr. Latourette has stretched out this progression. Perhaps it was not his affair to go beyond the usual chronological tabulations of events to indicate his point, rather than to follow his crystal clear exposition of consequences, as in his "History of the Expansion of Christianity." From the point of view of his present procedure perhaps he can prescind from clarification of two things vital to any understanding of our own fateful acts in Eastern Asia: our inability to understand that such notions as "nation," "sovereignty" or "suzerainty" of one people over another did not exist in the minds of Confucian Asia; and that Korea, which Professor Latourette hardly mentions, is in reality and always has been the detonation contact point of high explosion jarring together from south and north, from east and west, and usually meeting on the 38th parallel until one or the other acts as high explosive generally does.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

Gustav Mahler. Alma Mahler. Viking. $5.00.

THIS is not precisely a new book. It is the belated translation of a work written by Mahler's widow (who became the wife of the famous poet and novelist Franz Werfel) in the German language and published in Holland in 1940. It is a very personal book, often more of a self-apologia of the widow than a well balanced biography of the composer. But because of the enclosed letters and other intimate biographical material this book will have a permanent place in the literature on Mahler.

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But from the way she writes her book you would expect her to be a self-centered person with many petty jealousies and therefore at odds with most of Mahler's friends. She likes to give the impression that only she understood Mahler, only she did him good, only she advised him rightly, only she enabled him to do his creative work under pleasant conditions. With great pride she publishes whatever kind and enthusiastic words her husband wrote her in prose and in verse; the serious conflicts of the middle period of their marriage are covered with tactful silence. While she is eager to appear in the best light herself, she has no scruples about castigating those who did real or alleged harm to herself and Mahler three or four decades ago. Richard Strauss and his wife especially bear the weight of her resentment. Thus a lot of personal trash is joyfully warmed up, hardly to the satisfaction of readers eager to learn more about the background of Mahler's creative ego or interested in finding out why such a good-natured man with a deep devotion for God and mankind, had so many embarrassing disputes with his musicians, as director of the Vienna Opera and as conductor of the New York Philharmonic and at the Metropolitan. Alma Mahler, influenced by the vogue for psychoanalysis, gives certain explanations for understanding him which are flat and without sufficient perspective. The personality of Gustav Mahler is still waiting for an interpreter able to give a full and true picture of his vital personality in all its demonic and pious aspects.

MAX FISCHER.

Buried Stream. Ernest Brace. Harcourt. $2.50.

MR. BRACE is concerned here—let us face it, all our writers are gripped by concern, and novels are exercises in self-exorcism—with one side of our middle class. It is that part which used to be seldom written about because it was so hard to celebrate. The fact that weaknesses in our middle class life have increasingly formed the texture of our novels is the theme of a sermon I will not write here.

But these people are a large part of our society. They are acutely aware of their own backgrounds. They are possessed by tortuous minds, and undiminished introspection. They are fundamentally timid and uneasy. They are cursed by the worst of God's gifts—reflection, understanding and pity. They are humbly proud of their own accomplishments, but they have no vanity. They have joy in their success, but it is a joy tinctured by anxiety and doubt and, sometimes, harrowing fear. They are not tough or hard. Always they are more than a little frightened, more than a little insecure. They are our Henry Adamses caught up in business and unable to afford his dilettantism.

Mr. Brace has chosen David Rayney to bear the burden of his book. He learned early the trick of carrying a cane as an affirmation, a spinal strengthening, a physical symbol of aggressiveness. He was invested with all the obvious premiums of success. He had a son in whose physical feats he took vicarious, masculine pleasure. He had a wife, lovely and beautiful, enamelled with dignity and coolness. She was an executive whose business superiority was clear even to David. She was a dream lost.

The author knows a good deal about women of this kind; about their half-shrill insistence; about their jealously refrigerated emotions; about their bourgeois gentility and "dignity"; who make marriage a state of antagonistic cooperation.

And he puts down on paper, with honesty and without much pity, this kind of woman—Lucy Rayney—who is continually proliferating in our middle class society; who collects all the premiums, who is happily gelid, but who is as passionate by design as the girl you met last night at the bar. Who is, therefore, essentially vulgar and vulgarizing; whose contribution to the emasculation of man is enormous; who destroys marriage, as noise destroys quiet.

She is all the hypocrisy of our marriages (she sells creams and ointments which stimulate desire). She was once (or so it is alleged) simple and desirable, and is about as warm as a Russian press release. She is eternally sought—like Keats' Grecian girl—a word, a gesture, some simple homage, her husband thinks will win her back again, the word will become flesh; win this woman to whom he is in human bondage, in final thrall, in final despair. At what enormous cost to human strength and human spirit do these women live; at what cost do they proliferate themselves in sons and daughters.

How David Rayney is led to leave her, his relations with another woman, with a young communist, his befriending a young Negro, are not matters for review.

But what Mr. Brace seems to be saying is that one must learn to pass through loneliness to an exhilarating sense of being alone, that the "courage to walk alone was the only valid symbol of a dream":

> Be secret and exult,
> For of all things that is most difficult.

It is strange that the final irony of American marriage is seen in the figures on Keats's urn.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

Doctors East, Doctors West. Edward H. Hume, M.D. Norton. $3.00.

A PHYSICIAN might be surprised that this book won the Norton Medical Award. The critic would be delighted if it proved a best-seller. It is the story of the Yale Hospital and Medical School at Changsha, China, from the pen of its chief.

If all physicians had the wit, the tact, of Dr. Hume, world peace would be nearer. He might not be flattered to hear that one critic saw in his book a prose poem, though "Doctors East, Doctors West" breathes the soul of poetry on its every page: a simple, uncritical sympathy for the spirit and egotism essential to man fumbling among unfamiliar superstitions.

"Sometimes a healthy girl, praying for her invalid mother, would receive the temple chief's injunction, *Ko Kan Chiu Mu*—Cut liver, save mother. Twice during our early years in Changsha we had word of a courageous, devoted daughter who responded unhesitatingly, cut open her own abdomen with a huge knife, managed to snip off a bit of her liver, and had the piece cooked in a broth for her failing mother. The gods have spoken. I must do their bidding and serve my mother, even though it costs me my life!—A nameless Oriental Antigone.

Thus Dr. Hume tells the traditions he learned to respect, the ways of the practitioners before which he had to be silent, so that the people might little by little learn to respect and trust him. Slowly the factual truth prevailed over cherished and guarded ancestral faith. And then the Japs came and drove them west and it is all to begin again. The voice is the voice of the missionary though the hands are those of Hygieia.

EDWARD L. KEYES.

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The Inner Forum

On Prejudice

FOR SEVERAL generations the Church in the United States was the church of the immigrant, the ignorant and the poor. There were exceptions, but they noticeably were exceptions. In the past half-century there has been a gradual transformation. Catholics have achieved their fair share of education and prosperity.

In the process two things have happened. First of all Catholics have imbibed of the great American success formula: it is good to be good, but to be good and rich is better. Secondly, during their years of bitter struggle as a contemned minority, Catholics have developed an intense group consciousness which verges on an inferiority complex; we are as quick to cry "A.P.A." as a Communist is to cry "Red-baiter."

These two tendencies—success worship and group solidarity—have generated in us what might be termed a religious braggadoccio. It is a muscular kind of apologetic, given to much chest-thumping and biceps-flexing. A work of art gains merit in our eyes merely by the fact of having been executed by a Catholic. A movie whose hero is a Catholic priest is a much better picture than one whose hero is a Protestant minister, even though the plots be identical.

Such child-like pride is quite human and quite understandable. But it becomes dangerous when we begin to identify such success with the progress of our Church. It is dangerous when the conversion of a prominent politician seems to us to prove something that would not be so evident from the conversion, let us say, of a schoolteacher. The peril becomes more acute when the election of a mediocre Catholic to political office causes more rejoicing than the choice of an abler, even a more honest man. This vicarious pride in what is, after all, merely an accidental juxtaposition of religion and achievement reaches its nadir in some of our Catholic press. There such headlines as "Catholic Bus Driver Wins Safety Award" or "Priest's Brother Chosen Board Chairman" are offered (an outsider might think) in proof of the divinity of the Church.

We Catholics have yet to learn that publicity can be a two-edged sword. The business man who said "I don't care what they say about me so long as they talk about me" is a poor example for us to follow. I do not mean that it is our fault if a priest happens to fit in a scenario better than a minister, or that the religious affiliation of a best-selling author ought to be suppressed. Neither do I mean that we ought to hide our light under a bushel. But I do think we ought to stop looking on such pabulum with the idea that it has any apologetic value. We ought to jar ourselves loose from the spirit of patronizing complacency which arouses in our Protestant brethren the same resentment that it would arouse in us, were the rôles reversed.

It has even got to the point where we no longer answer our critics in Christian fashion. We have become so self-satisfied that we can no longer conceive of an opponent being honest in his fear of us, sincere in his suspicion of us. When Methodist Bishop Oxnam says that the Catholic Church in principle is opposed to the separation of Church and State (which happens to be true), we answer him by saying that he doesn't believe in the Divinity of Christ. We have come a long way from the "soft answer" of the

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Scriptures. We have come a long way from the spirit of Christ Who sought to win, rather than to answer, an honest opponent. We have come a long way from the apologetics of primitive Christianity when a Justin reasoned sweetly, if firmly, with an emperor.

Ours is a warped psychology. In the early Church (as today in missionary lands) every unbeliever was looked upon as a potential convert. Here and now, everyone who dares to disagree is looked upon as a potential enemy. I am uncomfortable because I am seated next to a Protestant minister at a banquet. God knows why it should be so. If someone had not introduced him as a minister, we could have got on famously. It is not a question of avoiding the taint of indifferentism. We go out of our way to emphasize our difference, our superiority. It sometimes seems that we deliberately make the Catholic Faith as unattractive as possible to outsiders; we camouflage the barrier until it looks far higher than it is.

These things we need: a spirit of humility that will recognize our own personal and evident shortcomings as Christians; that will recognize too that our critics, our opponents, even our enemies may quite possibly be sincere. A spirit of kindly and gentle friendliness that will place the emphasis on the third word, when we speak of "our separated brethren." A love of truth that will enable us to recognize integrity wherever we find it and not allow us to bask in the bastard security of "successful Catholics."

If we must be in the news, let the headlines speak of Catholic labors for social justice, for racial equality, for political morality. If, for example, the atomic bomb is ethically indefensible, let us forthrightly say that we would rather see our country overrun by communists than drop a single bomb on a Russian city. Such things will not make us popular, but they will make us strong.

Never yet have I encountered a convert whose mind was first turned to the Church by anything he had read in the daily newspapers. Invariably behind every gift of faith there is a story of contact with individual Catholics who had learned to distinguish between honest error and evil will.

It is doubtful whether all the hundreds of columns of publicity attendant upon the recent Consistory at Rome will bring a single convert into the Church. I doubt whether all the civic banquets and receptions will bring increment to the fold. But it is quite conceivable that some member of one of the plane crews which carried American delegations may find grace as the result of the human friendliness and simplicity that he found in one of his passengers.

LEO J. TRESE.

CONTRIBUTORS

Victoria OCAMPO is a distinguished Argentinian writer, editor and patron of literature; this article is based upon a lecture given at Columbia University.

George N. SHUSTER, formerly managing editor of THE COMMONWEAL, is the president of Hunter College, New York, N. Y.

Ted LE BERTHON is a newspaperman from the Pacific Coast.

Anne FREMANTLE is an English writer at present living in New York, N. Y.

Charles DUFFY teaches at the University of Akron, Akron, Ohio.

William Franklin SANDS lives in Washington, D. C.

Max FISCHER writes for the German language press in this country.

Francis DOWNING is assistant educational director of the United Auto Workers.

Edward L. KEYES, M.D., is one of the founders of THE COMMONWEAL.

Rev. Leo J. TRESE is pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Carleton, Michigan.

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